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KT photo | **Tim Bath**
Rob Burgess, Tribune night editor

House of Burgess: Planned attack on Planned Parenthood

Center for Medical Progress releases misleading videos

By Rob Burgess
Tribune columnist

July 14, the Center for Medical Progress released an 8-minute, heavily edited version of a 2 hour, 42 minute raw video. The name left little to the imagination about the intended message: “Planned Parenthood Uses Partial-Birth Abortions to Sell Baby Parts.”

The edited version now has 2.6 million views, while the full footage has 216,000. The edited clip begins with ominous music playing over a black and white title card: “The footage you are about to see was taken from an undercover meeting with a top-level Planned Parenthood abortion doctor executive. Some viewers may find this content disturbing.”

The video later shows another title card containing the U.S. Code sections outlawing organ selling and partial birth abortion between out-of-context video sections from a surreptitiously obtained July 25, 2014 conversation with Dr. Deborah Nucatola, Planned Parenthood senior director of medical services.

In the full 60-page transcript, Nucatola goes back and forth with two actors posing as a “Fetal Tissue Procurement Company.” The actors keep pushing this point about trying to add some profit to the tissue donation. Nucatola quotes a price of “$30 to $100 [per specimen]” for shipping and handling costs.

She says over and over again that the money is not for monetary gain. “Affiliates are not looking to make money by doing this,” said Nucatola. “Nobody should be ‘selling’ tissue. That’s just not the goal here.”

After I finished reading and watching, I found the group had done it again. On July 21, it released another 8-minute edited version of a 73-minute raw video of Mary Gatter, president of Planned Parenthood's Medical Directors Council, titled: "Second Planned Parenthood Senior Executive Haggles Over Baby Parts Prices, Changes Abortion Methods."

I would expect more in the near future. (Flames need stoked, after all.)

"House Republicans took notice, with party leaders calling for investigations just one day later," reported Samar Khurshid of The Hill on July 16. "Speaker John A. Boehner and Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy issued terse statements, the Judiciary and Energy and Commerce committees announced hearings and Rep. Lynn Jenkins, R-Kan., called for a Justice Department probe. ... Rep. Tim Murphy, a member of the House Pro-Life Caucus and chairman of the Energy and Commerce subcommittee [who is] looking into the video, said at a news conference he'd seen the clip weeks before. Asked afterward why he and others waited until this week to take action, Murphy struggled for an answer before abruptly ending the interview."

The release corresponding with certain political events was more than a coincidence.

“There are several very unusual circumstances surrounding the video, perhaps most notably the timing of its release, which corresponded with action in the House around a bipartisan-authored bill that would support the manufacture and sale of a commemorative coin, the sale of which would fund various breast cancer research and support services initiatives,” reported Jennifer Gerson Uffalussy of Yahoo Health on July 16.

“Following the release of the video, enough congressional Republicans had rescinded their support for the bill to effectively end it before it could even begin — purportedly because of their desire to not show support for an organization that funds Planned Parenthood.”

No federal Planned Parenthood money funds abortions. “Planned Parenthood receives more than $500 million annually in government funding, mostly through Medicaid and grants,” reported Sarah Kliff of Vox on July 22. “Most of this money goes toward providing low-income women with family planning services like STD screening and contraceptive coverage.”

It’s the dishonesty involved in every step of this attack I find so preposterous. The footage was produced on a lie, edited deceptively and used to push unrelated legislation.

Rob Burgess, Tribune night editor, may be reached by calling 765-454-8577, via email at rob.burgess@kokomotribune.com or on Twitter at twitter.com/robaburg.